### IN THE CLAIMS:

Please **cancel claims 1-20** without prejudice or disclaimer, and **add claims 21-44** as follows:

**1-20.** (*Cancelled*)

**21.** (*New*) A method of configuring a plurality of computer entities into a plurality groups, each of said computer entities comprising:

at least one data processor;

at least one data storage device; and

a network connection for communicating with the other computer entities in the same group as said at least one data processor,

said method comprising performing the following steps for each of the groups:

assigning one of said computer entities to be a master computer entity of a particular group, the at least one data processor and at least one data storage device of said master computer entity being arranged to provide the functionality of said master computer entity to one or more slave computer entities of the particular group;

assigning at least one of the other of said computer entities to be a slave computer entity candidate of the particular group;

causing the at least one data processor and at least one data storage device of said master computer entity to apply at least one configuration setting to the at least one data storage device of the slave computer entity candidate of the particular group so said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group is set to have an equivalent functionality to a user as said master computer entity of the particular group; each of said computer entities having security mode settings;

checking whether said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group has the same security mode setting as the master computer entity of that group; and

if said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group does not have the same security mode setting as the master computer entity of the particular group, then preventing said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group from being a member of the particular group.

22. (*New*) The method of claim 21, wherein the checking step is performed before said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group joins the particular group so said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group is excluded from the particular group without ever joining the particular group.

**23.** (*New*) A method of configuring a plurality of computer entities into a plurality groups, each of said computer entities comprising:

at least one data processor;

at least one data storage device;

a network connection for communicating with the other computer entities in the same group as said at least one data processor,

said method comprising performing the following steps for each of the groups:

assigning one of said computer entities to be a master computer entity of a particular group, the at least one data processor and at least one data storage device of said master computer entity being arranged to provide the functionality of said master computer entity to one or more slave computer entities of the particular group;

assigning at least one of the other of said computer entities to be a slave computer entity candidate of the particular group;

causing the at least one data processor and at least one data storage device of said master computer entity to apply at least one configuration setting to the at least one data storage device of the slave computer entity candidate of the particular group so said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group is set to

have an equivalent functionality to a user as said master computer entity of the particular group, each of said computer entities having at least one domain;

checking whether said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group has the same domain as the master computer entity of that group; and

if said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group does not have the same domain as the master computer entity of the particular group, then preventing said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group from being a member of the particular group.

24. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the checking step is performed before said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group joins the particular group so said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group is excluded from the particular group without ever joining the particular group.

25. (New) A method of configuring a plurality of computer entities into a plurality groups, each of said computer entities comprising:

at least one data processor;

at least one data storage device; and

a network connection for communicating with the other computer entities in the same group as said at least one data processor,

said method comprising:

assigning one of said computer entities to be a master computer entity of a particular group, the at least one data processor and at least one data storage device of said master computer entity being arranged to provide the functionality of said master computer entity to one or more slave computer entities of the particular group;

assigning at least one of the other of said computer entities to be a slave computer entity candidate of the particular group;

causing the at least one data processor and at least one data storage device of said master computer entity to apply at least one configuration setting to the at least one data storage device of the slave computer entity candidate of the particular group so said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group is set to have an equivalent functionality to a user as said master computer entity of the particular group, the foregoing steps being performed for each of the groups;

determining whether said master computer entity of the particular group has a DHCP configuration;

in response to said master computer entity of the particular group being determined as having a DHCP configuration, determining if the master computer entity of the particular group can use UDP broadcast based IP provisioning to connect the slave computer entity candidate of the particular group by name;

in response to the master computer entity of the particular group being determined to be able to use UDP broadcast based IP provisioning to connect the slave computer entity candidate of the particular group by name, causing the master computer entity of the particular group to determine if the slave computer entity candidate of the particular group can use UDP broadcast based IP provisioning to connect to the particular group by name;

determining that said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group has the DHCP configuration; and

in response to said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group being determined not to have the DHCP configuration, preventing said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group from being a member of the particular group.

26. (*New*) The method of claim **25**, wherein each of the steps thereof is performed before said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group joins the particular group so said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group is excluded from the particular group without ever joining the particular group.

**27.** (*New*) In combination, a first headless computer entity capable of being a master computer entity for a group of headless computer entities; and

at least one additional second headless computer entity coupled with said first computer entity,

each of said computer entities comprising:

at least one data processor;

at least one data storage device;

a network connection for communicating with the other computer entities in the same group as said at least one data processor, the at least one data processor and at least one data storage device of said first computer entity being arranged to provide the functionality of said first computer entity to one or more of the second computer entities via a network connection, one of the second computer entities being a slave computer entity candidate of the group, the at least one data processor and at least one data storage device of said first computer entity being arranged to apply at least one configuration setting to the at least one data storage device of the slave computer entity candidate of the group so said slave computer entity candidate of the group can be set to have an equivalent functionality to a user as said first computer entity, each of said computer entities having operating characteristics, the at least one data processor of the first computer entity being

arranged for (a) checking, via the network, whether said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group has at least one of the same operating characteristics as the first computer entity, and (b) preventing said slave computer entity candidate from being a member of the group if said slave computer entity candidate does not have the same operating characteristics as a predetermined one of the operating characteristics of the first computer entity.

**28.** (*New*) The combination of claim **27,** wherein the predetermined one of the operating characteristics of the first computer entity is security.

**29.** (*New*) The combination of claim **27,** wherein the predetermined one of the operating characteristics of the first computer entity is domain.

**30.** (*New*) The combination of claim **27,** wherein the predetermined one of the operating characteristics of the first computer entity is configuration.

**31.** (*New*) The combination of claim **30,** wherein the configuration is DHCP.

**32.** (*New*) The combination of claim **30,** wherein the predetermined one of the operating characteristics is UPD broadcast based IP provisioning to connect to the group by name, followed by a

determination that the slave computer entity candidate can be configured for DHCP.

**33.** (*New*) The combination of claim **27,** wherein the predetermined one of the operating conditions is UPD broadcast based IP provisioning to connect to the group by name.

**34.** (*New*) A computer network comprising:

a management console having user inputs, and a processor including an operating system and a network connection for communicating with a computer entity of the network;

a master headless computer entity coupled via the network to be responsive to commands from the management console resulting from the user inputs; and

at least one headless slave computer entity coupled to be responsive to commands from the master headless computer entity so that the headless computer entities form a group so that changes in the configuration of the master computer entity induced by the management console propagate to all slave computer entities of the group, the headless computer entities of the group being coupled to each other and the master headless computer entity being coupled to the management console so that all computer entities of the group appear to computer entities of the network outside the group as a

single computer entity having the same functionality as the functionality of the master computer entity.

35. (*New*) The computer network of claim **34,** wherein each of the headless computer entities is arranged to act in the same manner as a single computer entity having resident application programs that were in the computer entities prior to the group being formed.

36. (*New*) The computer network of claim **35,** wherein the master computer entity includes a utility application coupled with the management console and utility applications of the  computer entities of the group, the master computer entity utility application being arranged for creating and managing the headless computer entities of the group, including the master computer entity, in response to commands from the management console and for configuring a master user application of the master computer entity, each of the slave computer entities including a utility application and a user application synchronized with the utility application of the master computer entity.

37. (*New*) The computer network of claim **34,** wherein the master computer entity includes a utility application coupled with the management console and utility applications of the  computer entities of the group, the master computer entity utility application being arranged for creating and managing the headless computer entities of

the group, including the master computer entity, in response to commands from the management console and for configuring a master user application of the master computer entity, each of the slave computer entities including a utility application and a user application respectively arranged to be synchronized with the utility application and user application of the master computer entity.

38. (*New*) The network of claim 34, further including a slave computer entity candidate for the group, the master computer entity being arranged to apply at least one configuration setting to the slave computer entity candidate of the group so said slave computer entity candidate can be set to have an equivalent functionality to a user as said first computer entity, each of said computer entities having operating characteristics; the master computer entity being arranged for (a) checking, via the network, whether said slave computer entity candidate has at least one of the same operating characteristics as the first computer entity, and (b) preventing said slave computer entity candidate from being a member of the group if said slave computer entity candidate does not have the same operating characteristics as a predetermined one of the operating characteristics of the master computer entity.

**39.** (*New*) The network of claim **34,** wherein the predetermined one of the operating characteristics of the first computer entity is security.

**40.** (*New*) The network of claim **34,** wherein the predetermined one of the operating characteristics of the first computer entity is domain.

**41.** (*New*) The combination of claim **34,** wherein the predetermined one of the operating characteristics of the first computer entity is configuration.

**42.** (*New*) The combination of claim **41,** wherein the configuration is DHCP.

**43.** (*New*) The combination of claim **41,** wherein the predetermined one of the operating characteristics is UPD broadcast based IP provisioning to connect to the group by name, followed by a determination that the slave computer entity candidate can be configured for DHCP.

**44.** (*New*) The combination of claim **38,** wherein the predetermined one of the operating conditions is UPD broadcast based IP provisioning to connect to the group by name.